

Legislative work—cont.'d

Grant Act of 2003. This legislation would fund a \$25 million matching grant program to provide training for law enforcement officers to safely enter methamphetamine labs. Furthermore, it would provide the same law enforcement officers protective equipment including Air Purifying Respirators and NOMEX fire-retardant suits.

Public Lands

Right to Ride Legislation

Congressman Nunes, in a letter, urged his colleagues to become an original co-sponsor of the Right-to-Ride on Public Lands Act. The bill recognizes the historic value and use of pack and saddle stock animals on U.S. federal land. Livestock use on public land has a long tradition in American culture. President Teddy Roosevelt, an avid environmentalist and outdoorsman, explored the West extensively on horseback. John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, traveled with pack-horses in 1869 through what would later become Yosemite National Park. Pack and saddle stock provide a natural way for visitors to enjoy federal lands.

Healthy Forests Initiative

Over a month ago, the House of Representatives adopted the Healthy Forests Restoration Act on a sweeping bipartisan basis. Consequently, Congressman Nunes sent a joint letter with a number of his colleagues to Senators Bill Frist and Tom Daschle asking them to act with all available speed on the bipartisan Healthy Forests Restoration Act or its

Senate companion. With another devastating fire season now in full-swing, and daily reminders of the human and environmental horrors that catastrophic wild-fire bring, I believe it is critical that Congress quickly conclude its work on this legislation so that forest managers can begin theirs. The reason for my urgency is clear -- if there is any hope of implementing hazardous fuels reduction and forest restoration projects under Congressionally-enacted expedited procedures before the onset of the **2004** fire season an October 1 deadline must be met.

Social Services

Congressman Nunes sent a letter to the House Labor and Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Ralph Regula, seeking Committee support for a change in federal law, which would prohibit States from withholding Older American Act appropriations from local entities if they fail to pass an annual budget in a timely manner. The State government in California consistently fails to meet its Constitutional requirement to adopt a timely budget. Older Americans Act funds are essential in maintaining social and nutritional services for senior citizens. These federal dollars should not be held hostage by State governments that fail to meet budget deadlines.

Trade

World Trade Organi-

zation (WTO) Agricultural Negotiations

Congressman Nunes wrote to the United States Trade Ambassador Robert Zoellick expressing his interests and concerns in the current round of WTO (Doha) agricultural negotiations. The methodology used in the Uruguay Round, to reduce in lieu of eliminating subsidies, had little effect on our domestic fruit and vegetable industry. Of course, this was primarily because the industry does not have subsidies to reduce. Since the Uruguay Round fruit and vegetable exports have increased only slightly while imports have increased significantly (Importantly, fruit and vegetable exports to the European Union (EU) have declined over 18% while imports from the EU have increased by almost 45%). Most of our fruits and vegetables are exported to Canada and Japan but there are other Pacific rim countries which offer export opportunities. Many of the Asian countries have extremely high tariffs, and every attempt should be made to harmonize tariff levels around the world. In this regard, Congressman Nunes applauds the U.S. proposal to reduce tariffs to a 15% level within five years, and he expects USTR to stand firm in seeking this goal.

Unfair Trade Practices

Congressman Nunes co-sponsored the U.S. Agricultural Products Market Access Act of 2003 Act, which will give the United States Trade Representative

(USTR) additional tools in addressing unfair trade practices. Specifically, the bill establishes a mandate for USTR to initiate investigations and to proactively identify countries that are denying U.S. agricultural commodities market access. Each year, USTR would be required to report to Congress a list of countries that are unfairly discriminating against American agricultural products.

Video games

Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 669, the Protect Children from Video Game Sex and Violence Act. This bill would prohibit the sale of video games that depict extreme violence, nudity or sexual conduct to minors under the age of 18. Currently, several retailers enforce the rating systems on the back of the video games by asking purchasers proof of age. However, there are many who do not and minors can purchase many of these ultra-violent games. This takes parents out of the decision-making process.

